

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /052 W

----- 118942

P R 051138Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8107

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17488

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH

SUBJECT: CONTINUING ALLEGATIONS OF CIA ACTIVITY IN THAILAND

REF: A) BANGKOK 17240

B) STATE 242478

1. SINCE THE EXPOSURE IN EARLY JANUARY 1974 OF THE CIA-INITIATED LETTER, THERE HAS BEEN A CONTINUOUS AND CONCERTED EFFORT BY MANY YOUNG THAI POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, SOME NEWSPAPERS, AND A FEW POLITICIANS TO CLAIM THAT THE CIA OR OTHER OFFICIAL AMERICANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO SUBVERT THE THAI POLITICAL PROCESS. AMONG THE INCIDENTS OR ACTIVITIES IN WHICH THESE ELEMENTS WOULD HAVE THE THAI PUBLIC BELIEVE WE ARE INVOLVED ARE THE FOLLOWING:

(A) THE STILL UNSOLVED MURDER IN MARCH 1974 OF CLAUDIA ROSS, AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST WITH THE BANGKOK POST. SHE WAS SUPPOSEDLY ANTI-CIA, AND PERHAPS MURDERED BECAUSE OF THIS ATTITUDE.

(B) THE DEATH IN JUNE 1974 OF FORMER ROI ET MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT CHAWIN SAKHAM IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT IN SARABURI PROVINCE. THE OTHER DRIVER FLED THE SCENE, A
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FREQUENT OCCURRENCE IN THAILAND. CHAWIN WAS ALSO AN OUT-

SPOKEN CIA CRITIC.

(C) THE PLAPLACHAI RIOTS IN BANGKOK'S CHINATOWN DURING JULY 1974. HERE OUR ALLEGED MOTIVE WAS TO CREATE DISORDER SO THAT THE MILITARY MIGHT HAVE AN EXCUSE TO RETURN.

(D) THE BROAD DAYLIGHT MURDER OF RAMKAMHAENG STUDENT LEADER SAENG RUNGNIRANDON IN AUGUST 1974. SAENG WAS ALSO ANTI-CIA AND A LEFTIST.

(E) THE SPLIT BETWEEN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DURING STUDENT PROTESTS AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION IN SEPTEMBER 1974, AS WELL AS ALL OTHER SUCH SPLITS ON ANY OTHER ISSUE DURING THE YEAR. OUR ALLEGED MOTIVE IN SUCH SPLITS IS TO DIVIDE AND RULE, CREATE DISORDER, OR INTIMIDATE CRITICS OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND.

(F) THE RESEARCH WORK OF THE ANEMIA AND MALNUTRITION RESEARCH CENTER CARRIED ON AT THE SUAN DOK HOSPITAL OF CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY. THE CIA IS CHARGED WITH USING THE CENTER AS A COVER FOR ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO CREATE DISUNITY AMONG THAI DOCTORS, AS WELL AS USING THAI AS GUINEA PIGS IN RECENT RESEARCH ON THE NUTRITIONAL VALUE OF ALGAE. (ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY, IN COOPERATION WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, SUPPORTS THE ALGAE RESEARCH).

(G) THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT OF ONE "THOMAS BARKER" OF THE U.S. EMBASSY TO ENLIGHT PRASAN MARUKKHAPITAK AS A SPY ON LEFT-LEANING JOURNALISTS (REFTEL A).

2. IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS THE DEPARTMENT RAISED IN REFTEL B, THE PRESS FUROR OVER THE BARKER INCIDENT SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSIDED. WE WOULD LIKE TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT PRASAN MARUKKHAPITAK IS A MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF THAILAND (SPT), WHICH IS PUBLICLY PLEDGED TO RID THE COUNTRY OF ALL U.S. MILITARY AND CIA PRESENCE. THE CURRENT FLAP MAY BE THE PARTY'S OPENING SHOT IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE U.S. MILITARY AND CIA PRESENCE IN THAILAND. SOME SPT MEMBERS HAVE PRIVATELY CHARACTERIZED USOM AND THE PEACE CORPS AS CIA COVER

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ORGANIZATIONS.

3. EMBASSY POLICY ON THE BARKER ALLEGATIONS IS NOT TO GO BEYOND WHAT THE EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SAID. THE NATION IS NOT ABOVE FABRICATING ATTRIBUTIONS TO "INFORMED EMBASSY OFFICIALS".

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MURDER, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, INTERVENTION, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BANGKO17488
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740317-0159
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741171/aaaaciqh.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) BANGKOK 17240
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Aug-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <10 DEC 2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTINUING ALLEGATIONS OF CIA ACTIVITY IN THAILAND
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US, CIA, (BARKER, THOMAS), (PRASARN MARUKPITAK), (ROSS, CLAUDIA), (CHAWIN SAKHAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005